

Summer 2001

Issue No. 11

Still....Keeping Track

Penton Owners Group Newsletter * \$5.00



The famous "Gangster" photo of the Penton brothers standing under the machine shop sign in Amherst, Ohio taken around 1950. L to R - Bill, Ted, John, and Ike.

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STILL ...KEEPING TRACK Newsletter of the PENTON OWNERS GROUP

The Penton Owners Group is a not for profit corporation chartered in the State of Ohio and an AMA chartered club. Our Federal tax I.D. number is 34-1860635.

The Penton Owners Group was formed to preserve and share the memories and the equipment of a very special time in motorcycle history. The first Penton motorcycle was manufactured in 1967 and the last in 1977. This was a time when the enthusiasm, ambition and creativity of the original Penton group helped shape a new industry and a new generation of dirt bike enthusiasts. Sport and competition motorcycles played a significant role in this motorcycle history. Our aim is to make the Penton Owners Group a source of information about the history of the Penton motorcycle, the Penton Company and it's many dealers, riders and extended family.

The mission of the Penton Owners Group is to enjoy and share all the memories from the past and the events of the future, as Penton motorcycle enthusiasts.

Club officer names and contact information have been removed from this document.



Still ...Keeping Track is published quarterly by the Penton Owners Group. Annual membership dues is \$20 per year for US residents (\$25 for foreign membership) and includes a subscription to the newsletter which is not available separately. Manuscripts, photos, drawings, etc. are welcome but no payment is made for material submitted, used, or retained. Please keep duplicates of your submissions, as we cannot be responsible for loss or damage.

Submission of material will be considered as assignment of all rights therein. Check out our web site at: www.PENTONUSA.ORG

Change of address: Give old and new address and notify us as least 6 weeks in advance.

Send address changes to: The PENTON OWNERS GROUP - P.O. Box 756 - Amherst, Ohio 44001

All information furnished herein is provided by and for the members of the Penton Owners Group.

The editor for this newsletter is Alan Buehner

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Alan Buehner

In putting this latest newsletter together, several things come to mind. The first is that how lucky I am to be involved with the quality and high caliber people that are at our monthly board meetings. John Penton will always take the center stage but, I am always amazed with the information that Doug Wilford, Al Born, Jack Penton, Paul Danik,

Dane Leimbach, and Matt Weisman come up with. These were some of the people that worked behind the scenes for John and many were, also on the front lines riding and winning races. When you come to an event to meet John, make it a point to see who else is standing around and meet them. Your efforts will be rewarded with many interesting stories, technical tips, and suggestions.

Another item that has me all pumped up is the latest reports on

the racing scene. Many of our Penton riders are winning races and being contenders at the Vintage MX races (see articles on Mail Box and Latest News pages of this newsletter). When I became involved with the Vintage Motorcycle events Penton motorcycles were obscure things that not many people wanted and very few people were racing. The bikes of choice were of all things Maicos and Huskys. Back in the 70's when I was racing, there were

very few Maicos being ridden, and they lived up to the motto "Maico breako". The reality of the vintage racing world is that Maicos are dependable and competitive bikes but they have to be worked on during and after races to keep them dependable. Pentons have been the beginners bikes for Novice and Intermediate riders. They are still very dependable bikes, but are still taken for granted and not treated like race bikes. Any race bike that is not treated as such and is not given a good going over after each race day will sooner or later give out during a race and lead to being traded for the latest, hottest bike being ridden on the race courses. I am happy to see reports of Pentons winning races in the expert classes. My opinion is that a Honda can beat a lot of bikes down the long straight-a-ways, but a Penton will beat them every time in the turns because a Penton has the handling and dependability that the Japanese bikes lack.

Mid-Ohio is coming up real soon. Although Penton will not be feature marque, again, this year, it will be the center of attention in the middle of the swap meet at our usual spot. I expect anything being sold related with Penton motorcycles to be hot commodities like they were last year. If you are going to Mid-Ohio to buy bikes and parts, get there early before they are sold out. If you are coming to Mid-Ohio to ride, I am hoping that many of you will be racing your Penton motorcycles in the AHRMA races on Sunday. We will be having our Penton exhibition ride again this year so that anyone that is unsure of their abilities to ride on a MX track can do so at their own leisure and see what it is like and also show off their bike. My reasoning for starting this ride four years ago was to encourage people to ride their Penton motorcycles and hopefully get them to race their Penton motorcycles. The more Penton motorcycles there

are on the tracks competing, the more Penton motorcycles will be winning. The more Penton motorcycles winning will encourage other racers to switch to a Penton to ride on.

Lastly, I hope that everyone plans on and tries to make it to the upcoming ISDT reunion in October. This year's event will be the biggest and best one to date. The location has been moved to Missouri which makes it more centrally located and easier to get to. It has also been in the planning since just before last years event. Dave Mungenast has taken it upon himself to contact many of the ISDT riders and encourage them to show up for this event. The POG will be attending this and have our display set up. More detailed information on this event will be in our next newsletter.



VINTAGE DAYS WEST at SEARS POINT

by Ted Del Solar

POG member Ted Del Solar of Illinois made the trip out to the Sears Point event this year all by himself and this is his report:

Left home on 4/25 at 4am, met Doug Wilford at Sears Point at 11am on 4/27.

Had a 10x10 pop up, table and 2 chairs. The Penton vertical flags, the signed banner, books, copies of ad and my 1977 250 enduro completed the Penton display.

3 members signed in and 2 new ones joined up on Saturday. On Saturday evening, Doug left for San Jose.

Sunday, I spent on the hill trying to locate Penton riders for the Motocross races. Found Gavin Housh who has an application to join but has put it off time

and again. He took a 2nd in the 1st moto of Classic 125 intermediate. He steered me to JP Morgan (a POG member) who was riding 4 classes and quite busy. In open age expert, he was 3rd on a 400. In 40+ expert, he took 1st over Brad Lackey and 3 Czech riders. In 250 expert, he was 3rd. These are 1st moto results only.

I saw 2 other Pentons but could not locate the riders. Left before the program was over in order to meet a nephew in Salt Lake City on Monday morning.

Arrived home at 8:45pm on 5/01.

Editor's note: J.P. Morgan finished 4th in the 40+ Expert class on his 400. Falta finished 1st, Marty Motes was 2nd and Brad Lackey finished 3rd. J.P. gave them a run for their money and still wound up with an impressive result.

Erik (Ike) Penton

May 14, 1918 - March 15, 2001

On March 15, 2001, John Penton's oldest brother, Ike passed away. Although I never got to know him, I did meet him two times. The first time was in July of 1995 at the AMA Vintage Days event at Powell Speedway in Columbus, Ohio. Ike was there at the Friday night dinner with his wife, Alice and his nephews Jack, and Jeff Penton. They were all there at the dinner to hear John Penton give a speech.

The second time I saw Ike was in January of 1999 in Amherst, Ohio where he and the Penton clan were gathered with the Penton Owners Group members to pay honor to John Penton at a recognition dinner where John was awarded a medal to commemorate his induction into the AMA Hall of Fame.

After reading Pat Leimbach's article in tribute to her brother, I was deeply touched and sorry that I did not get to meet this very special person. Ike on many occasions was there for his brother John. He preferred the far back seat away from the bright rays of the spotlights or working back stage rather than center stage. His name is mentioned 10 times in Ed Youngblood's book, John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution. Ike's involvement with his father's old 1914 Harley Davidson play a major role in influencing John Penton. I think that I would be safe to say that if that old motorcycle never existed, there probably would not be a Penton Owners Group today.

The following articles are being shared with you to pay tribute to Ike Penton and help you to understand who he was.

ONLY SOME ARE FARMERS

by Pat Leimbach.

My brother, Erik, who died recently was the "elder brother" for whom nobody killed a fatted calf. He was 19 and a college sophomore when our father died, leaving mother with a fruit farm and seven minor children. Against her protests he came home and took his place as head of the family. Brother John recalls a scene where she gathered her brood about the table, set forth the fact of a \$6,000 mortgage and the need for all of us to pull together. I was 10 and Bill was only 8, so I think the prospect of destitution rested very lightly upon us.

Erik was the most unlikely of my five brothers to have assumed the role of farmer. The rest were square and sturdy, blond peasant types, but Erik was thin and fineboned with fair skin and a shock of dark, curly hair. Already in his fourth-grade photo, wearing a shirt and tie and a faintly self-conscious smile, hands neatly folded on his desk, he looked like the scholar he was.

Yet, it was Erik who abandoned engineering and came home to operate the cider mill, trim trees, pack apples and direct the rest of us in the ways we should help. What leisure time he might have had he spent keeping an array of derelict machinery in working order. Brother Ted, the family maverick, had run away from home at 15 and bummed his way to the West Coast. Now at 18, he was back, attending welding school and planning to marry. The war came on as Henry, the next in line, finished school and took a job in a defense plant. (Both Ted and Henry were 4-F. Ted had lost an eye and Henry had a lame leg).

Mary went off to college and brought home a roommate to whom Erik lost his heart. He loaded his bride on the back of his second love, his Harley Davidson, and went on a \$20 honeymoon.

"We went until we'd spend \$10," said Alice, "then turned around and came home." Did marriage give Erik

some sort of private life at last? Heavens no. Ted had recently vacated the bedroom he had annexed to our old farmhouse when he and Mabel married. But once Ted had seen the golden West, a farm in Ohio couldn't hold him. He took his bride and went to California to build ships. Erik and Alice moved in with Mom, Mary, John, Bill and me. Henry had married by then and moved out. John graduated and left for the Merchant Marines and eventually the Navy.

All those years young Bill had been the apprentice farmer. When he was a junior or senior and had committed himself to the farm on a continuing basis, Erik finally went on to a profession he enjoyed more. He'd worked nights as a machinist in a defense plant even as he farmed and eventually had a career as tool and die maker.

He and Alice built a home of their own, adopted 2 children and went on to enjoy 58 years together. They moved eventually to a hobby farm down in Ashland County where he could give his children the sort of pleasant farm life he'd made possible for his younger brothers and sisters.

Erik never got the formal education he deserved, but he was a scholar all his life. He loved history and biography. When he and Alice moved into the retirement home, where he spent his last 2 years, he called me into the sitting room and waved an arm at the bookshelves. "There," he said, with a big smile, "now I feel at home. I've got my books."

Our brother Erik was a totally good man who gave generously of his life so that our lives could be better, that our mother's life could be easier. Looking back on our happy childhood, I realize that it was we who consumed the fatted calf, but our "elder brother" only rejoiced for us.

Reprint from the 4/01/00 "Country Wife" article of the Chronicle newspaper.

"IKE"

by Norman B. Miller

Who is Ike? Eric M. Penton would be the answer in my life. I have heard about some Supreme Allied Commander and past President named Ike. That would be a less famous one in the world of motorcycles. Ike Penton as we would call him was the second Penton to own a motorcycle in the 1930's. The first would have been the father of our beloved Penton Brothers, Harold Penton. Harold's worn out Harley was the start of the love of motorcycling for that gang as well as the birth of the Penton racing machines. Ike told me he brought that Harley back to life and the brothers took notice. The rest is history, now known as The Penton Owners Group.

I am sad to say that my dear friend Ike passed away last month at the grand age of 82 years young. He was the behind the scenes support of the famous racing brothers. Ike had an engineering background and an incredible knowledge of machines of all sorts. He and I spent many hours working on some of his mechanical loves of his life. The hours of work never seemed long when you worked with Ike. He as a master mechanic as well as a tool and die maker. If we couldn't find the right part he would make it in his own little shop in Polk, Ohio. He had an understanding of metals and alloys and an uncanny ability to tell the tensile strength of a piece of steel or wire just by looking at it. As a boy, I was intrigued with watching him work the laths and other machines in his work shop. One of the most important things that I learned from Ted was how to set up and use machines.

My first memories of this wonderful man were in 1958 when I was 5 years old. Ike was making an elevation screw for a Civil War cannon that my father was using. Ike loved studying about that war as did

I. Many of our work hours were filled with shared knowledge of the Civil War as well as the history of his and my family. Both of our families go way back together in the Amherst, Ohio history. He would tell me of his fellow Harley rider Bill Sipos and how they would travel to my Grandpa Miller's farm to have a little hard cider. He would also share stories of my Uncle and his classmate Harry Powers. We also would discuss the wonderful things my Grandfather Powers did to help his family after the untimely death of his Father.

Ike played an important behind the scenes part in the success of his brothers John and Bill. He was their pit crew at the enduros and his support vehicle was his Harley with a special side car that was equipped with tools, fuel, and spare parts. He would ride his Harley to the pit stops to wait for their arrival and was there to help them keep their bikes running. His small role helped them to achieve great success.

Ike and I were able to attend numerous motorcycle events. He on his 1933 Harley and me on my Evolution Harley. What a pair we made, I being 6' 3" at 250 lbs. and he at 5' 6" and 135 lbs. There never was a generation gap between us either. The 34 years between us never caused an argument. I even had the honor of dating his beautiful daughter Nancy and to this day her family and mine are the best of friends. Tractor and engine shows would also be part of our travels together as well as the local air shows. This man knew more about the various engines we viewed than the people that owned them.

Ike rode his motorcycles up until just a few years ago. I am honored to say I got to ride with him and learn from this wonderful person. I miss you Ike and I will try to pass on to others the knowledge that you so graciously shared with me.

Thank you POG for letting me share just a little of my memories of my friend Ike.

"Memories of Ike"

by Al Born

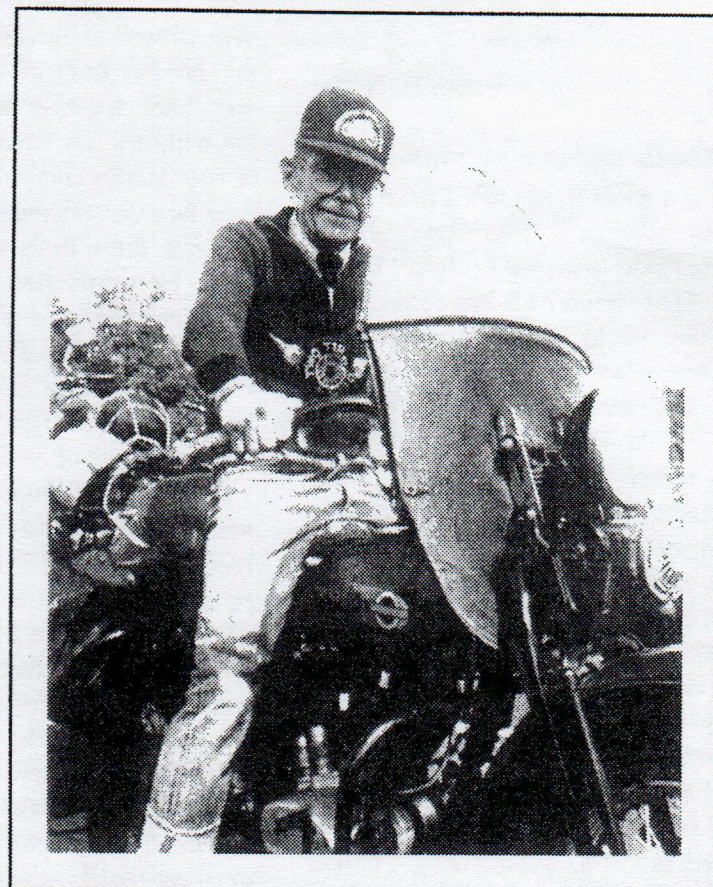
My first recollection of Ike Penton was in the summer of 1956. I went to the Penton Brothers Motorcycle Shop with Ralph Haslage to look at their BSA motorcycles. Ralph had a 650 BSA twin and he took me for a ride on it one evening and I was hooked, after having a 125cc Harley and then a 45 cu. Inch Harley with a three speed transmission that I spent more time kicking and push starting it than I had spent riding it. Anyway, as I was dealing with John and Elmer Reichart on a 1955 BSA 500cc twin, (by the way, they both laughed when I wanted to trade in the Harley), Ike came in the Motorcycle Shop, wearing an old greasy pair of coveralls that I think was supposed to be gray, but I am not sure of it. Ike also had a cap on, with the bill turned straight up, and my first thought was, "I wonder where this farmer came from."

In the next ten or twelve years, I saw Ike quite a few times but I never got to know him real well until the early spring of 1967 when I moved into the apartment over the machine shop. At that time, Ike kept his pickup truck in the garage under the apartment and of course at this time Ike was still doing a lot of work in the Machine Shop. I always worked either afternoon or midnight shift so I could both work and race on the week ends, therefore I spent a lot of time during the day either at the Motorcycle Shop or at the Machine Shop with Ted and Ike.

I remember well when Ted was installing the diesel engine in his little yellow Ford truck and how he would often call Ike over and ask him just how he would do certain things because he had to make many changes to the suspension, steering and many other things in order to make the diesel engine fit right. I also remember Ike snickering at Ted when

he first mentioned the big chrome exhaust stack that was going to run up the back of the cab. Incidentally, when Ted got all done, he named his truck "The Little Smoker" and put the name on the truck.

A little later on, Ike got a job as a tool maker at General Motors in Elyria and I remember him always going to work no matter what the weather was like. I will always remember Ike spending quality time with his Mother as well as with his family. I remember Ike as one who was always willing to help anyone in getting a way figured out to do something and then being willing to help get it done. I did not see Ike very often in the last few years, but when I would meet up with him somewhere, he was always the same friendly Ike, usually with his cap bill turned up. In my opinion, Ike was a fine gentleman who loved the simple things in life and I know that anyone who knew him well has lost a good friend.



top photo:
Ike Penton on his Indian motorcycle

bottom photo:
L to R - George Bliss, Alice Penton, and Ike Penton at the 2 Tired Motorcycle Club picnic, July 2000.



Tech Tips AFTER THE RACE from "Let's Do It Right" by John Cobb

Reprint from the April 1973 issue
no. 5 of "Keeping Track"
newsletter.

Now that you won the race, how to prepare so you'll win next week again.

First, remove air box cover and filter, put rag in carburetor boot.

Next wash the bike as soon as possible. Right after the race is best. Because if it was a muddy race the mud will wash off faster while its wet. Wash the bike thoroughly, lay it on its side and wash underneath it. Pull the tank and seat off and wash them off. Remember if you wash it good when you are going over it and you find if you have to pull the engine it will be much easier because it is clean. Also it will save much time cleaning the outside of the engine after its out. Reinstall gas tank and start engine. Run for 10 minutes. Now that its clean lets start preparing it.

Leave the seat and tank off. Take the front and rear wheels off and check the bearings, clean the brakes. Grease the brake cam, making sure it is not too sloppy in the backing plate. With sand paper lightly sand the brake drums and shoes. Check the spokes and trueness of the rims. (I know most people don't have a wheel truing stand, but a vise will work). Put the axle in the wheel and tighten the axle in the vise. Get a piece of wire and mount it along the work bench so its a little ways from the rim. Spin the wheel. Tighten spokes accordingly to true up rim. Check the tires for wear and cuts. Also be sure the valve stem isn't being pulled out by the tire spinning on the rim. On the rear wheel be sure and check the rubber bushings. If worn or cracked, replace them; it could save you

buying a new rear hub later. Check the rear sprocket carrier bearings making sure they are tight and well greased. If you have to remove the bearings to repack with grease or replace, make sure to heat the aluminum around the bearing and tap out lightly. If you don't take care doing this, the new bearings may be loose in the sprocket carrier.

Now, check sprocket teeth for wear.

While the rear wheel is off, check swing arm and bushings. See if you can move the swing arm back and forth or sideways. If so, either the swing arm bolt is loose or bushings are bad. Check the shocks for being bent or leaking. Now you can replace the rear wheel. Don't put the chain back on yet. Wash it off good with solvent or gas and soak it in oil until you are ready to use the bike again.

While the front wheel is off, check the fork head bearings. If you have back and forth movement or tight spots, it's best to remove the triple clamps and inspect bearings and races. Repack and tighten them. If its been 4 or 5 races on the same fork oil, you should change it. Flush the forks out with solvent and refill. 135cc for the C.M.F. (32mm Ceriani forks) and 200cc for the steel gas tank model pre 71 (and 200cc for the 1974+ 35mm Ceriani forks). Replace front wheel.

Remove the carburetor, clean and inspect thoroughly. Check air box for cracks, make sure there's no dirt inside, (clean) and replace filter if necessary. If it's a muddy race, make sure the filter element is paper and well sealed. Remember, care should be take here. If dirt or water pass thru the filter and air box, it will ruin pistons, rings, rods and cylinders, just to name a few. So take care.

If you have about 6 races on the engine, pull the top end off and inspect cylinder, piston, rings and rod for wear. Also take the tip off exhaust pipe and clean baffle in it.

This can plug up causing poor engine performance.

After 3 or more races or enduros or any real wet race, you should change transmission oil. The best way is by removing the clutch cover (on the Sachs motors) and tipping the motorcycle on it's side to drain oil. Doing it this way you can inspect the clutch gear and primary drive gear. With the cover off see if you can tip the clutch wheel back and forth. If so, the bushing in it is probably bad and should be replaced. Before putting clutch cover back on, pour in 3/4 Quart of transmission oil. This is more than the book calls for but won't hurt a thing.

Pull mag cover off and inspect Motoplat, making sure it's clean and dry. Leave the mag cover off until you are ready to race again. This will let everything dry out good. Check the front sprocket and teeth while the cover is off.

Check the coil mount, making sure its tight and grounded properly.

Now go over the whole bike checking and tightening every nut and bolt on it, making sure motor mount and swing arm bolts are tight. Reinstall gas tank making sure the padding is in the right place so the tank doesn't beat against the frame. Put foam rubber blocks between seat and tank and over (not in front of) are intake opening. Now push seat in place and tighten. You should be pretty much ready to go. Don't forget to oil cables and levers. This sounds like a lot of work, but if you want to be a winner it takes a lot of work!!

Editor's note: Since this article was written in 1973, I took the liberty of updating parts of it for our readers who have bikes produced after this time period. Additions to this article are printed in italics. Although this article is almost 30 years old, it still holds true for anyone riding their Penton today.

AMA VINTAGE DAYS AT MID-OHIO

The Penton display will be back again this year in the swap meet area of Mid-Ohio during the AMA Vintage Days event from Friday July 13th to Sunday the 15th. There are a couple of activities being planned for the Penton Owners besides the usual AHRMA races.

Saturday evening there will be a cook-out at the Penton Display provided by Alan Buehner. Bring a chair and spend some time to relax, chow down and enjoy some fellowship and tall stories with your Penton buddies. We will start serving around 5:30 pm.

Sunday will be the 4th annual running of the Pentons. I contacted Jack Turner, the Executive Director of AHRMA, and he has given us the green light to do our Penton exhibition ride again this year. It will be held (time permitting) during the half-time break, after the first set of motos has been run, which is generally between 12:30 and 1 o'clock. The MX track will be over by the campground area with a different course laid out for this years races. Check out the ad on the bottom of this page for more information about this event.

The Penton display will be put together on Thursday afternoon. Several E-Z ups will be set up to display some of the many photos and information boards that were in last year's display. Members are welcome to bring their bikes to put on display, however you do so at your own risk. The club is not responsible for damage or theft. You may have a problem trying to transport your bike to and from the

display. Please read and follow the Mid-Ohio rules printed on this page! Try to drop off your bike Thursday afternoon (after 4 pm) or Friday morning (before 10am). Try to drive your vehicle into the swap meet area. If you are refused entrance, drive over to the shower area to park and unload your bike, then push it to the Penton display. Do not ride your bike unless you have a license plate on it. Please pick up your bike on Saturday evening if you will be racing on Sunday. All bikes must be picked up before 3pm on Sunday.

Camping is available in the camping area near the MX track. If you want to camp with the other Penton Owners, look for the "PENTONVILLE" banner. We will try to reserve as many spots as we can to accommodate everyone.

Do you have some time to help out during the event? We can always use some help in setting up in the mornings between 7:30 and 8 am and taking down the display items in the evening at around 5:30pm on Friday and 8pm on Saturday. The display will be taken down 3pm on Sunday.

The Penton Display will be in the middle of the swap meet. It will be next to the black topped road that runs down the middle of the swap meet (see map on next page) near the port-a-potties. Look for the green PENTON banners.

FEATURE MARQUE T-SHIRTS

Remember those special T-shirts that we were selling last year that were sold out on the first day? There were enough of you asking about having more of these printed up that we contacted the fella that made them up for us last year and have

ordered another batch. This will be your last chance! The price will be the same as last year \$20. They will be the same colors and have the 2000 dating on them. Sizes will be in medium, large, x-large, and xx-large. John Penton, as usual, will be happy to autograph them for you.

JOHN PENTON BOOKS

There will be more books available to purchase at the display. These will be sold at the event only. They will not be available to purchase from the club after the event. Any mail orders should be sent to the AMA Museum. Check their web site for ordering information. The cost for each book will be \$20.

MID-OHIO RULES

No bicycles, pets, alcohol, or open fires are permitted.

Any motorcycles being ridden must have a valid license plate.

Anyone riding a motor vehicle must have a valid drivers license.

No children will be allowed to operate any vehicles.

The speed limit in the swap meet area is 5 MPH. Pedestrians have the right of way.

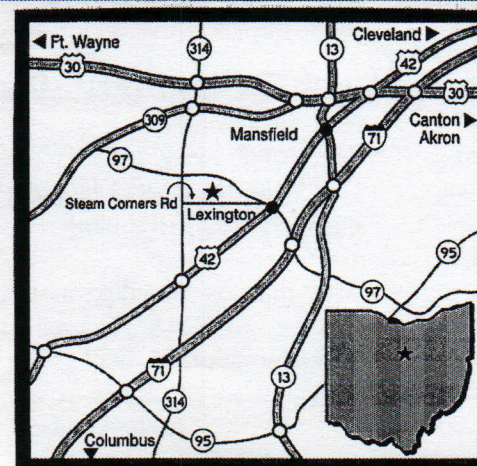
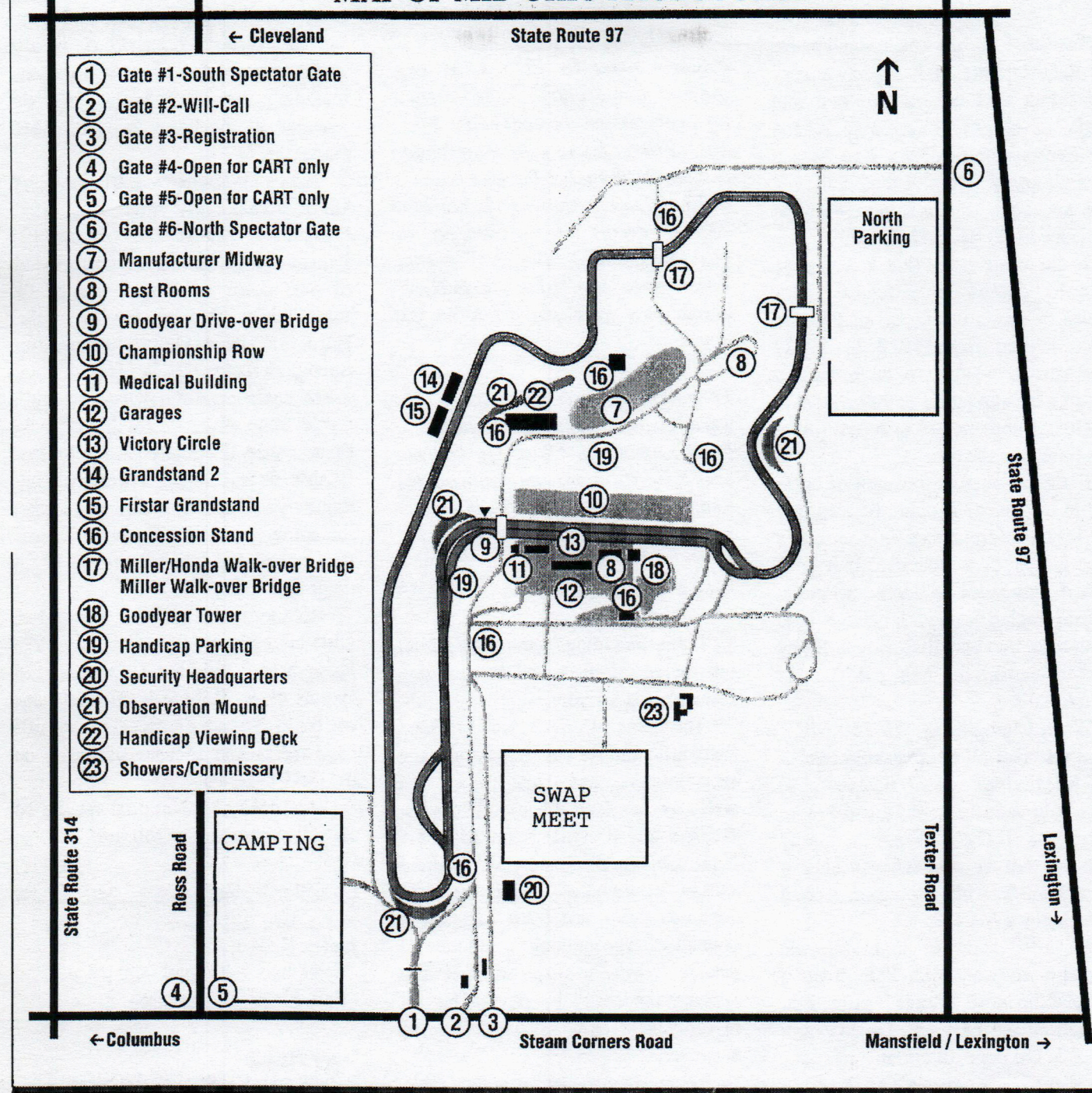
Anyone caught breaking these rules will be asked to leave. No warnings and no refunds.

Sorry, no Sunday night camping.

For your convenience - shuttle buses will be operating throughout each day to transport people to various areas around the Mid-Ohio grounds.

THE PENTON EXHIBITION RIDE - Sunday July 15th at Mid-Ohio during the AHRMA MX races. This is a ride around the MX course not a race and is open to anyone that wishes to ride a Penton motorcycle. You must be an AMA member (remember to bring your AMA card) and sign the release form prior to the ride at the Moto Cross registration table. There is no entry fee. There will be 3-4 laps around the track. Any size or year of Penton motorcycle is eligible. There will be no scoring or trophies handed out for this event.

MAP OF MID-OHIO RACECOURSE



SWAP MEET AREA

Penton Display *

blacktop road

*restrooms

Mail Box and Web Page

Enclosed is my membership fee for another year. It has been a very interesting and informative one and made me wish I had been able to keep my Pentons and KTMs I've owned throughout the years. It also made me wonder about a few things. Perhaps someone in POG can help me.

Is there any way that I would be able to obtain or purchase color copies or prints of any or all Pentons manufactured from 1972 to 1977? I've always wanted to have framed pictures of non-Japanese bikes of that era to remind me of how enjoyable that time was for me.

Is there a Penton museum of some sort in existence? It could be a formal one or an informal one in someone's large garage or warehouse. If it does exist, I may want to donate a Penton Central racing jersey. I believe it is similar to the one that Frank Stacy used to contest the MX nationals in the late 70's.

When I bought my '76 250 MC5, I was told that all Pentons sold east of the Mississippi were Pentons but those sold west (except Hawaii) were badged as KTM's. Was there any truth to that (I remember seeing a buyer's guide with a maroon tanked KTM badged MC5)?

An ad I saw in a motorcycle magazine showed John Penton on a bike and the word "Roots" printed on the bottom of the page. On his tank was a KTM logo but if my memory serves me right, the KTM logo as such (white letters on a blue oval shaped background) didn't come into being until about 1983. Was it something that KTM added?

Finally, I remember a magazine one referred to a late model Penton/KTM MX bike as having an on/off switch instead of a throttle. I thought that was funny but even if there was some truth to that metaphor, my opinion of the brand was still high.

Thanks for your time.
page 10

Michael Tong, Hawaii
Member #322

Editor's note: In 1975 KTM took over distribution of their motorcycles on the west coast. The KTM ad photo with John Penton is a photo taken in 1969 (see page 71 & 73 of John Penton book). The blue "KTM" decals were placed on the gas tanks during the ISDT events. There were also blue "PENTON" decals that were put on KTM gas tanks

The following letter and some photos were received from Kent Knudson, a POG member in Ohio. He has not only been fixing up and restoring his Penton motorcycles, but he has other people racing them.

May 25, 2001

I am including some info about our racing effort as well as enclosing some photos for you.

The name of our "team" is Team Petovarna and we collect, restore, and race Pentons and Husqvarna's (as well as a few Sachs, Hercules, DKW's and Rickman's) in AHRMA National events. Personally, I am a former automotive engineer for Elebrock Corp. and I am currently a consultant specializing in industrial design. I own the bikes we race and sponsor the riders by paying for all motorcycle and travel related expenses.

Kevin Brown of Athens, Ohio rides my 1974 Penton 250 in the Sportsman 250 Expert and Plus 40 Expert classes. He is a former factory Husqvarna, Can-Am, and KTM rider, a multiple ISDE gold medalist, and a former KTM dealer. In 1987 Kevin finished 2nd in the AMA National Hare Scramble Series and in 1988 he finished 2nd in the Grand National Cross Country (GNCC) series.

Gary Roach (a POG member) of Belpre, Ohio rides my 1974 Penton 400 in the Sportsman 500 Expert and

Open Age Expert classes. He is a former KTM support rider and was a top Pro GNCC rider. Gary is also well known for his restorations, including the 1977 Sachs 250 MX featured in the latest issue of VMX magazine.

James Giddings of Little Hocking, Ohio occasionally rides my 1973 Husqvarna 125 in the Classic 125 Intermediate class. James performs all of our motor work and learned the trade while working for his father Harold at their Penton, Husqvarna, Sachs, Hercules, DKW, Hodaka, and KTM dealership. Known as Harold's Cycle Shop, their dealership was the Penton shop originally owned by Rod Bush's father. James currently owns many vintage European dirt bikes including the 1977 Sachs 250 MX featured in the latest issue of VMX magazine.

Robbie Jenks of New Lexington, Ohio also occasionally rides my 1973 Husqvarna 125 in the Sportsman 125 Expert class. Robbie is currently one of Team Yamaha's five factory off-road riders and focuses primarily on the GNCC series.

Our AHRMA National results so far this season are as follows:

Camelback Raceway - Mt. Clare, WV - May 5th

Kevin Brown

- Sportsman 250 Expert - 1st place
- Plus 40 Expert - 1st place

Gary Roach

- Sportsman 500 Expert - 1st place
- Open Age Expert - 1st place

Lincoln Trail Motorsports - Casey, IL - May 20th

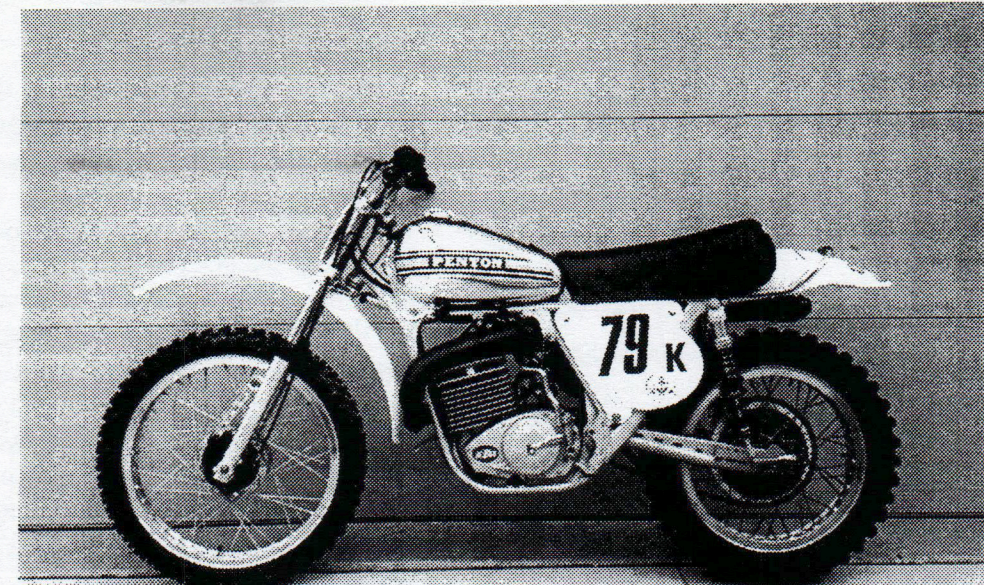
Gary Roach

- Sportsman 500 Expert - 1st place
- Open Age Expert - 1st place

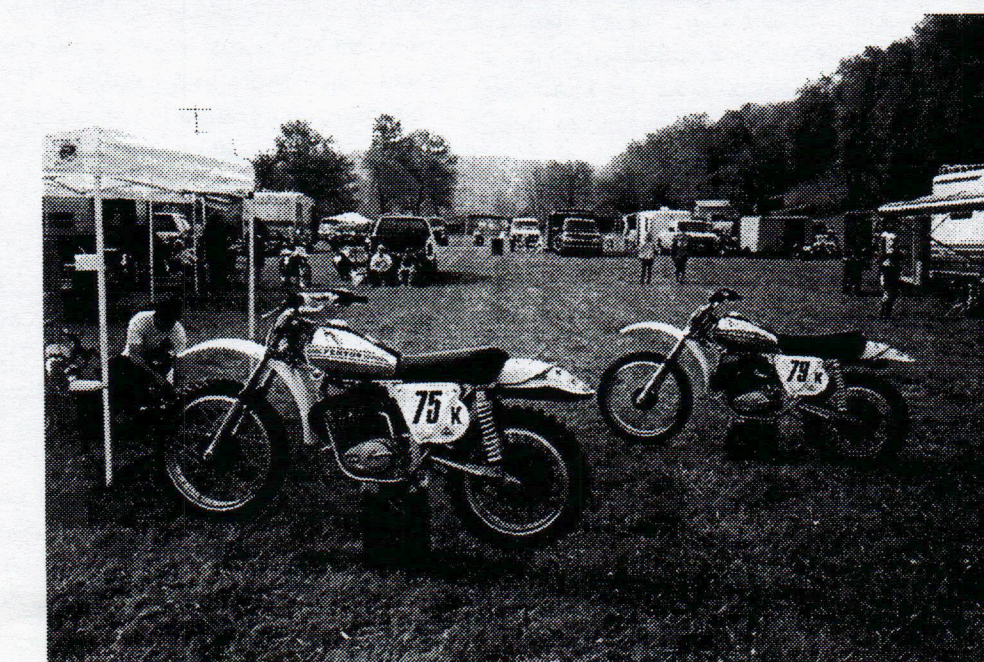
We plan on attending most of the remaining AHRMA National east of the Mississippi. I will keep you updated on our results as we go.

Kent Knudson, Ohio

One of Kent Knudson's collections, a beautifully restored 1974 Penton 400. Kent is a firm believer in Larry Wall's motto "Ride'um Don't Hide'um."



R to L - Kevin Brown, Gary Roach, and James Giddings. All are expert riders helping to keep Kent's bikes running and winning.



Kent's bikes at Camelback Raceway - Mt. Clare, WV. May 5, 2001 - the first race of the season.
#75K - 1974 Penton 250
#79K - 1974 Penton 400

Latest News

Just when you think that you have heard it all, along comes something that tops them all. In April I received a phone call from a motorcycle dealer in Maryland who had just obtained a Penton 125. He wanted to know what year it was and after he read off the serial number I told him that it was made in February of 1973. He then started telling me how original and unscathed it was. The original owner only rode it 3 times. The first two times it was used for trail riding. The third and last time it was ridden in a MX race and crashed. It was taken home after the race and parked in the garage for 28 years to gather dust.

The only signs of wear on this bike is a ding in the exhaust pipe, a torn seat cover, and some slightly worn paint on the foot pegs. There is not a spec of rust on the bike. It even has the original small stickers on the frame (made in Austria).

The highlight of this story is what the dealer paid for this rare gem. It was free! The original owner just wanted it out of his garage.

My purpose in telling this story is to let all of our members know that there are still many Penton motorcycles still sitting in basements and garages throughout the country collecting dust. The owners do not know about the vintage motorcycling world and in many cases like the above story they could care less about bikes any more. I do not know any specific way to uncover one of these, but with a little bit of patience, luck, and determination any one of you could duplicate this story.

Alan Buehner

On April 8th, POG members Gary Brinton of PA and Lee Buffenmyer of Pa, volunteered their time to spend that Sunday to set up and man a POG display to promote membership in the club and show off some of their bikes at the Will Stoner swap meet in

York, Pa. Alan Buehner was at the event to sell his Penton Parts and made arrangements with Will Stoner to have a space for the club to set up their display. Lee brought in his E-Z up tent and the POG banner was hung in the back of it to form a backdrop for the display. Gary brought in his 1972 Jackpiner to display in the tent. Lee brought in two bikes. One was his Berkshire "hillclimber" which was placed in the tent, the other was his 1972 Six Days that he entered in the bike show which won him a trophy in the competition bike category.

The display made a great stopping point for all of the POG members that came to the meet to say hi, get to know one another, and swap stories about the latest news.

Gary and Lee signed up two new members for the club and handed out several application forms for potential members to mail in.

I encourage all members to remember and give a word of thanks to Will Stoner the next time you see him for his generosity and help to the club. The next event he will be at is the AMA Vintage Days event at Mid-Ohio in July. Also, please remember to thank Gary and Lee for their help.

Do they know something that we don't?

I received a call from a fella in Switzerland in early April who is trying to locate an exhaust pipe for a 400 KTM. In my conversation with him, he said that vintage bike collecting and restoration in Europe is very popular. Bikes over there are sold at flea markets and KTM motorcycles are in big demand. A 1972 thru 75 125 in rough worn out condition which generally sell between \$200 to \$600 here go for about \$1,200 U.S. over there. The owner of a restored KTM can have close to \$8,000 U.S. tied up in it.

The same motorcycles with the "PENTON" name on them would sell for a lot more money and are more desirable. When I asked him why, he

told me that John Penton is still remembered over there and is still as popular as he was back in the 60's making a name for himself riding his NSU and BMW.

After hearing this, I am even more thankful that John is still alive, well, and involved with this club.

Alan Buehner

What good is a stock 400 Penton MXer?

The Date: Sunday April 22

The Place: Swan MX Park - Texas

The Event: Vintage Pro-AM Challenge

On Saturday evening all the old factory riders, Brad Lackey, Billy Grossi, Steve Wise, Barry Higgins, and Kent Howerton, were gathered around talking about the next day's racing. Bets started going around as to who would get the hole shot and be the first one to make the first turn on the start of the Vintge Open Pro Class race. Would it be Brad Lackey on his tricked-out CZ, Billy Grossi on his rocket ship Husky that was special built for him by Johnny LaFever, or Steve Wise on his reed valve Honda?

Sunday's race had these three famous riders lined up at the starting gate along with the Texas vintage expert riders. All the bets were off when at the drop of the gates, it was a bone stock Penton 400 with a worn piston that made it to the first turn by a 2 bike lead. The lead was held for one lap before being overpowered by the factory riders. Although I was in the top 5 during most of the race, I had to withdraw due to weakening of my grip due to a neck injury I am still recovering from.

After the race, some of the factory riders came over to see what kind of secret weapon beat them on the start. They couldn't believe that my Penton was pure stock. It was a great day and a great ride!

Joe Wright, Texas

Meeting minutes have been removed from this document.





This photo was provided by Boyd Reynolds of ACTION SPORTS. Boyd shot this photo of Tom Penton getting a helping hand up a creek bank. The following note was attached to the photo: "One time at a show, I made a comment to Jack Penton (before John Penton, Malcolm Smith, and numerous other national riders) about the protruding high pipe and muffler and that it prohibited short guys like me from pushing the bike." Jack said, "Boyd, your supposed to ride the bike, not push it!" "Well, I want you to know that even the Penton boys have to PUSH now and then."